peared in the Indian Express (New Delhi) dated the 21st May, 1992 under the heading "Congress trying to woo back Muslims, says Kesari" referring to the Minorities Commission; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main task of the Commission shall be to evaluate the progress of the development of minorities, monitor the working of the safeguards provided in the Constitution for the protection of the interests of minorities and in laws enacted by the Central Government or State Governments, besides looking into the specific complaints regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of the minorities. It shall also cause studies, research and analysis to be undertaken on the issues relating to socio-economic and educational development of the minorities and make recommendations for the effective implementation of the safeguards for the protection of interests of minorities by the Central Government or State Governments. It may also suggest appropriate measures in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the Central Government or State Governments.

World Bank aid for tribals

1781. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tribals all over the country are in a very deplorable condition;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some aid is forthcoming from the World Bank for tribal development, and if so, the quantum thereof; and

(c) if so, the formula being considered for distribution of the said aid among the various concerned States?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) As per the study conducted by the Planning Commission in 1983-84, 58.40 per cent of the STs in the rural areas and 39.90 per cent of the STs in the urban areas live below the poverty line. The corresponding figures for all the population is 40.40 per cent and 28.10 per cent respectively.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Schemes for weaker sections

1782. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what stes are being taken by Government for the economic uplift of the weaker sections other than the poverty eradication, educational concessions and reservation of jobs;

(b) whether there are any schemes to encourage the weaker sections to come forward to set up individual small scale industrial units, medium scale industries and to establish trading companies; and

(c) if so, what is the number of those benefited by these schemes so far?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (c) At national level there is a National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance Development Corporation. Its authorised share capital is Rs. 75.00 crores and paid up capital of Rs. 56.67 crores. The Corporation advances loans to individuals and cooperatives for implementing technically viable schemas in all walks of life. They have so far advanced Rs. 47.10 crores loans covering 1,41,000 beneficiaries.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED) was set up on 6th August, 1987 Its authorised share capital is Rs. 50 crores and paid up share capital is Rs. 18.31 crores. Its main objective is to purchase the produce of the tribals and pay them a remunarative price. The turn over of this Corporation during 1991-92 was Rs. 40.10 crores. It also acts as an apex Corporation for all the State level Tribal Development Corporations.